

10 Ways to Get the Most Out of Exercise

Written by Utah Department of Health
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You probably already know that exercise helps your entire body – from your physical well-being to your mental state of mind. But did you know that it's never too late to start? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that even when initiated later in life, exercise still provides important health benefits. Here are a few tips to get you started, and more importantly keep you going.

Start small. If you've been inactive for a long time, start with low to moderate level activities. Over time, you can increase duration and intensity. But push yourself to reach the higher levels – 44% of adults get some exercise, but they don't do it regularly or intensely enough to protect their heart.

Take a stroll. Try walking around your place or work, either during your lunch hour or during a brainstorming session with a coworker.

Stand up. Try getting out of your chair when you talk on the phone. It may sound like a small difference, but you burn more calories standing than sitting down.

Take the stairs. It's a way to get your heart pumping. According to the National Institutes of Health, a well-conditioned heart pumps 36,000 fewer times per day than an average heart – this equals 13 million fewer beats per year.

Do yard work. Gardening, mowing, raking – these can all provide small amounts of activity.

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Make yourself at home. Home exercise can be very beneficial. Exercise videos and equipment such as a stationary bike can provide the whole family with the opportunity to work out. Plus, you can do some exercises while watching television.

Workout with a friend. They'll hold you accountable, help keep you motivated, and even make working out more fun.

Add variety. Walk one day and ride your bike the next – you won't get bored as easily if you mix up your exercise routines.

Get creative. If you don't have a membership to a fitness center, you can always do stretching, push-ups or sit-ups at home or while you travel. You don't always need expensive equipment to get in shape.

Hit the trails. Go on a bike ride – it's a good way to enjoy nature and at the same time burn calories. You may even be able to ride your bike to work.